

Alberta Finance Economic Bulletin

Economic Statistics Released During the Week of March 22, 2004 to March 26, 2004

	Reference Period	Month/Previous Month (m/m)	Month/Previous Year's Month (y/y)	Comments
Canadian Composite Leading Index (1992=100)	February			
	189.9	0.4%	5.2%	In February, the Canadian Composite Leading Index increased 0.4%. Manufacturing lead growth in February for the second straight month, after performing poorly throughout most of last year. New manufacturing orders were up 1.2% from January levels. Household demand was mixed in February as a 0.9% increase in furniture and appliance sales was offset by a 1.7% decrease in sales of other durable goods. The Composite Leading Index was up 5.2% over the same period in 2002.
Wholesale Trade (\$ Millions)	January			
Alberta	3,915	-1.5%	5.1 %	Canadian wholesale trade fell 3.2% in January, largely the result of a decline in the motor vehicles sector (-15.2%). Excluding motor vehicles, wholesale trade was down only 0.4% from December levels. Alberta's wholesale trade decreased 1.5% in January after increasing 1.7% in December. On an annual basis, Alberta's wholesale sales grew 5.1%, the third highest increase among provinces after Prince Edward Island (+8.6%) and Newfoundland and Labrador (+6.8%).
Canada	35,789	-3.2%	-2.3%	
Retail sales (\$ Millions)	January			
Alberta	3,249	1.4%	1.7%	Canada's retail sales rose 1.6% in January. Excluding motor and recreational vehicles, retail sales increased 2.2%, reaching a record high \$20.1 billion. Gains in January were lead by general merchandising (5.3%), drug and patent medicine stores (3.0%) and clothing (1.7%). Furniture (-1.2%) was the only retail sales component to record a decline. All provinces except Saskatchewan (-0.8%) reported rising retail sales in January, with the largest increases occurring in Quebec and Prince Edward Island (+2.4%), New Brunswick (+2.0%) and Ontario (+1.9%). Alberta's retail sales reported a healthy gain of 1.4% in January, after falling 1.7% in December.
Canada	26,362	1.6%	1.2%	